

**MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009**

Commissioners Present: Nicole Murray Ramirez , Bruce M. Abrams, Joyce Abrams, Mary Alcock, Susan Hawk, Gary Lynn, Les Williamson, Gracia Molina de Pick, Nghiep Le, Teresa Oyos,

Excused: Carolina Alcoser Ramos, Shonee Henry, Mark K. Dillon

Absent: Lorraine Johnson,

Staff: Ashley Walker, Executive Director (ED); Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney

Chair Ramirez called the 204th meeting of the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission (HRC) to order at 5:39 p.m.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

Roll Call: 10 Commissioners were present, 3excused, and 1absent.

Minutes – The March 18, 2009 minutes were approved.

II. OLD BUSINESS

Harvey Milk Breakfast/Nonfiscal Holiday: Chair Ramirez reported that although we are not even in May yet, over 600 tickets have been sold for the Harvey Milk Breakfast, which will be held next month at the Holiday Inn. Like the MLK and Cesar Chavez breakfasts, it looks like this breakfast will reflect the diversity of the county. Senator Mark Leno publicly acknowledged that we are the first municipality in the state to come on board with the Nonfiscal holiday, even before the movie came out. Chair Ramirez thanked the Commission for their historic vote, which has been noted across the state. The bill will likely be signed by the Governor. A ticket to the breakfast is \$35, and if you're interested, contact Vice Chair Abrams.

Cesar Chavez Parade and Breakfast: Commissioner (Cmsr.) Lynn reported that he went to the parade with Cmsr. Hawk. The parade, which went for over a mile, turned out to be a nice event, which went smoothly and was well organized. They carried HRC signs, and the media covered the event. At the end of the parade was a ceremony with booths, with active participation by all. Overall it was a positive experience; there was good attendance by the community, mostly residents of the community. Cmsrs. Oyos and de Pick (grand marshal) also attended. Vice Chair Abrams reported that he and Cmsr. Ramos were at the breakfast with Councilmember Faulkner at the table. Cmsr. Oyos was also at the breakfast.

Immigrant Rights Toolkit: ED Walker reported that the toolkit is out on the streets. A section has been added about doing congressional visits. They have 10 toolkits left, which will be given to those who become members of the IRC.

ED Walker stated that this past week, in Jamul, African-Americans were at a party where a fight and attack occurred and racial slurs were made. The car driven by the African-Americans were attacked, the car wrecked, and one of the students was sent to the hospital. The Sheriff's Office said they are taking their time investigating because there were over 50 witnesses. The family of the victim and some members of the community want to attach "hate crime" to the incident. Channel 10 interviewed Robbie Robinson rather than ED Walker, but it does not appear that it was aired, which would be a good thing because it may have been too inflammatory, and ED Walker would be the most appropriate person to talk to about this situation. ED Walker called them today but did not get a call back. There is a SD United Against Hate meeting tomorrow where it will be discussed and there will be a push to do something. There are still investigating the situation and ED Walker will keep us updated.

New Mexico Governor repeals death penalty in state: ED Walker reported that Gov. Richardson signed the bill last month. They are hoping to stop the death penalty in other states, and because of the economy, it may be considered because of the cost argument.

III. PRESENTATIONS

- A. REALITY CHANGERS – CHRISTOPHER YANOV:** Christopher Yanov, Executive Director of Reality Changers, did a presentation on Reality Changers, a program which provides inner-city youth from disadvantaged backgrounds with resources to go to college. Mr. Yanov discussed the origins Reality Changers, which started in 2001 with 4 students and \$300. Mr. Yanov discussed the history of Reality Changers, where they are today (earned over \$4M in scholarships), Reality Changers' partnership program with UCSD, some of the program's success stories, and his best-practices/strategy – the "PUT" [promote-understand-transcend] model. In June, Reality Changers will have a scholarship banquet. Chair Ramirez requested more information on the banquet and to provide the information to Chair Ramirez and ED Walker.
- B. REQUEST - "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL" RESOLUTION – COL. STEWARD BORNHOFT, USA (RET):** Chair Ramirez introduced Col. Steward Bornhoft and commented that San Diego is the only major city that has not repealed on the record the ban on gays and lesbians in the military. We are also one of the few major countries that does not allow gays to serve. Chair Ramirez has talked to members of Council and they would like to take a stand on this issue and feel it should originate with the HRC. Col. Bornhoft did a presentation on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." He presented on why HRC should care about this issue, provided facts and a history on the statute, why it was created, what changed in the past 15 years, the status on open service in foreign militaries, and reported that there is 2/3 public support for open service. Col. Bornhoft sought support from the HRC to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and asked that we support a resolution for City Council to support the Military Readiness Enhancement Act, which would repeal the ban on gays, lesbians and bisexuals serving in the military and replace it with a policy of nondiscrimination. Col. Bornhoft provided draft resolution language. Chair Ramirez stated that the draft resolution would be revised with the last paragraph, first sentence, edited to add that the "Human Relations Commission urges the Mayor and City Council to support" the Act.

- *A motion was made by Cmsr. Alcock, seconded by Cmsr. De Pick, to support a resolution in support of the Military Readiness Enhancement Act, which would repeal the ban on gays, lesbians and bisexuals serving in the military and replace it with a policy of nondiscrimination. All were in approval.*

Guests introduced themselves: Edward Chang, Ben Gomez, Craig Wilgenbusch, Stephen McNabb, Andrew Brooks, Mike Magee, Mike Kinleby, James Ginelli, Arthur Kelleher.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT – ED Walker reminded the Commissioners to complete their Month Activity Participation Reports.

V. CHAIR’S REPORT – None.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Hate and Violence Prevention – Vice Chair Abrams asked for written statements from chairs last month. Hopefully they will be prepared for next month’s meeting. Tomorrow from 3-5 they will have the Hate Free San Diego meeting where they will talk about the Jamul incident.

B. Immigration – None

C. Educational Disparities – Cmsr. Abrams stated that the SDUSD reps are scheduled to visit in June. In addition to Arun Ramanathan, Agin Shaheed and Bernie Rhineman will be coming.

Chair Ramirez confirmed with Cmsr. Hawk that a representative from the Native American community will present in May.

Cmsr. Alcock stated that Councilmember Faulkner will also speak, along with the head of his homeless program, and they are waiting for a date.

D. Criminal Justice System Disparities Committee – None.

E. Legislative Update – None (covered under previous discussion of Harvey Milk Day by Chair Ramirez).

V. COMMISSIONER REPORTS – None.

VI. MEETING ADJOURNED: The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Prepared by Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney
Approved by Ashley Walker, Executive Director